1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

145 left upper lateral, so presumably his age would be rather more than
481 a year, assuming that teeth are cut approximately as in our own children. Since my return I have noticed some English children running on all fours in the same way, but I am sure it is less general
516 here than it seems to be among the Solomon Islanders. If a child sees anything on the ground that interests him, he will pick it up and sit back on his haunches, still keeping his soles flat on the
857 ground. A favourite amusement with one group of children was to set two babies of about this age a little distance away from them, and then attract their attention, so that they made for the other children, who watched to see which of them got there first. This was done so often that it appeared almost like an organized game, the babies enjoying it as much as the older children (Pl. 14*a*).

Methods of carrying babies.

854 There are no cradles, but sometimes a baby will be put to lie on a woman's hood spread on the ground. Most of its time, however, is spent in being either carried or nursed.

A very small infant is carried in the arms. Sometimes it will be supported also by having its legs put through a sling made of the broad fibre that grows round the stem of the banana palm, thus leaving one of the mother's hands free (Pl. 13*a*). At an early age it is set astride the hips, with the mother's hands clasped round it (Pl. 13*b*). A baby soon learns to stretch out its legs ready to be put in that position when it is lifted from the ground. If it is to be carried far, as on a journey, the child is frequently supported on the hip by a sling of banana fibre, or, nowadays, sometimes by means of an old loin-cloth, the other end of the sling being hung round its mother's neck. Men will also carry infants in this fashion. The native word for this method of carrying a child is *gi*. The
[857] ordinary pick-a-back (*pāki*) is also used by both sexes, and this, more often than the hip position, is in favour with little girls, who often carry around a baby not much smaller than themselves. They clearly take a pride in so doing, and often used to bring their charges to let me see what a big baby they could carry. Often the child can run about quite well by itself and rather resents the indignity. To carry a child supported on the palm of the hand, in a standing position, is *di*, to perch the child on one's shoulder is *watok*. When the child is old enough to hang on securely, it is put to sit on the top of the load of wood or taro its mother is carry-

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

861 laughed. But I have seen children really frightened by the jokes of their elders, as ours are by threats of 'the bogy man'. Pasab told his little daughter Beawon that something she had eaten by the road had poison in it. She cried, and all the people standing round laughed at her.

863 As a rule but little notice is taken of the habits of children as regards natural functions. They follow the example of their elders. But if a child is seen to be about to relieve himself in front of the 854 row of huts, he will be scolded and sent round to the back. Mothers clean their babies with bundles of leaves, which are then thrown away casually into the bush. But the excreta of a baby who is [565] *tunaun* must, while he is very small, be collected carefully and thrown into a special enclosure on the beach because he is specially liable to danger from 'poison'.

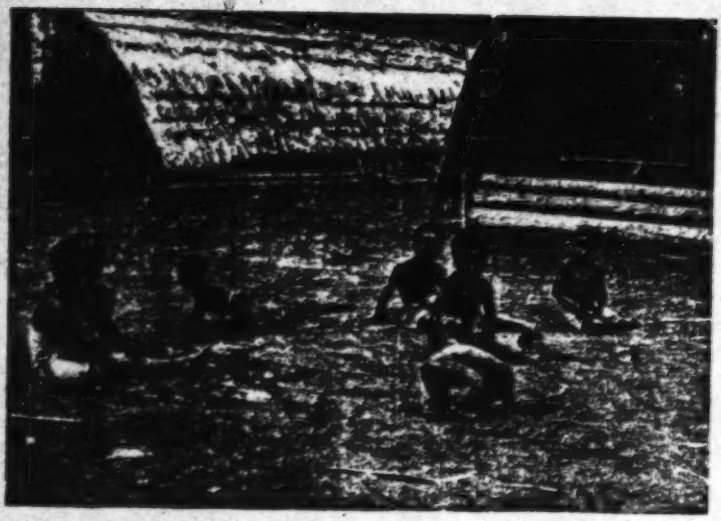
CHILDREN'S PLAY

●857 Although it is true that these children take up a life not very different from that of their elders, at a much earlier age than do our own children, yet I think they have, on the whole, a happy childhood. There is plenty of scope for the development of character, and some children seem to possess individuality to a marked degree. Life is never so serious that there is not time for play and laughter, even for adults, and the children certainly have their fill of both.

While they are little, children of both sexes play together, but as soon as the boy reaches the age when he puts on the *upi*, which may sometimes be as young as seven or eight (approximately), but usually, apparently, about nine or ten, he is forbidden to play or have any close converse with the girls and women, so these boys form a 'gang' of their own both for games and also for work, in so far as they do not join with the older men in fishing and hunting expeditions, &c. The little girls very early take up their share in the routine work of the village, fetching water, collecting shell-fish on the reef, going to the taro garden, or looking after the babies, and there does not seem to be any tendency for the girls of the village to form a gang. They are more often to be seen going about in twos or threes, or with the older women. Even before the age of segregation, the little boys seemed more often to be playing by themselves than with the little girls, perhaps because the girls were more likely to be engaged in the daily round. No duties seem

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 14



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a. CHILDREN PLAYING: KURTATCHI

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b. DIVING: AT PETATS

Facing p. 174

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

to be exacted of the small boys until they are old enough to go fishing seriously.

Most of the active games seem to be played in rather desultory fashion, nothing in the form of sports or contests being organized. A good deal of running after one another goes on, of course, but I never saw children racing, or playing anything which could be compared to our 'Tag'. A form of 'Hide-and-seek' is played mostly by adults. The children like to tear about the village waving flaming-sticks or torches made of coco-nut palm leaves, and though the risk of fire must be considerable, nobody ever says: 'Don't.'

The children of Petats, where there is a good sandy beach, and, usually, a smooth sea, at least on the 'lagoon' side of the island, were always in and out of the water. Even the four- or five-year-olds were good at diving, going in either head or feet first, or in a kind of squatting posture, clasping their knees, but from no great height (Pl. 14*b*). They get a very good elastic swing to a standing dive. They swim under water for some distance, with a movement of the hands close to the body, palms facing backwards, and do not seem to mind the sharks, which I have sometimes seen quite close to them. It may be that these sharks are harmless, but man-eating sharks are sometimes heard of, and accidents are known to occur. The children's light-coloured palms and soles show up very strikingly beside their dark bodies through the transparent water. The village of Kurtatchi, standing as it does on the top of a steep cliff with a rocky beach and the breakers of the open sea below, offers little inducement to indulgence in water games. The small children there did not go into the sea, except for walking through pools in the reef at low tide. The older boys and men occasionally bathed in the surf, some used surf-boards to ride the rollers, the boys wearing the *upi* looking very odd as their head-gear bobbed up and down. The native word for surf-riding is *tʃitʃir*, and descriptions of it occur in some of their stories of times past, including one involving the famous 'two brothers'.

Both boys and girls are excellent tree-climbers, but this is done chiefly to get coco-nuts, areca-nuts, or opossum, not merely as a sport. They climb with the aid of a band of fibre round both feet. There is, however, a game in which the boys set up a dead tree in the earth, or, more often, in the sand of the beach, swarm up its trunk, and try to balance themselves on the highest branch that will bear them, egging each other on to go up higher on to a smaller

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

526 branch. I have also seen them play with a tree inverted, so that its
857 spreading roots were uppermost; the game was to climb to the top
481 of the root and stand upright, quite a feat of balancing, since the trunk was far from steady (Pl. 15).

857 As usual, there are many games based on imitation of their
524 elders. A favourite amusement among the small boys is to truss up one of their number and carry him about on a pole, as their fathers carry pigs. Usually they do not get very far before the struggles of the victim throw the whole lot of them over, amid shrieks of laughter, and sometimes howls.

Sometimes rough attempts are made to construct tiny huts for the purpose of playing at house, but those I saw were very unskilfully put together, and speedily fell to pieces. But once, up in the mountains, I saw what was clearly a children's playhouse, constructed by adults, a small edition of the usual native hut, complete with little plank-beds, beside which lay pipes and materials for chewing the betel-mixture! I was told that sometimes a group of little girls will go off by themselves and build leaf huts in the bush or on the shore, and live there for several days, catching crabs and small fish on the reef, and lizards or other small creatures in the bush, bringing some of these back to the village to exchange for taro, which they take away with them to cook for themselves. This was not done while I was there, but I have sometimes seen a couple of little girls take a bit of broken pot and boil small pieces of taro in it, carefully wrapped up in leaves in imitation of the procedure adopted by their mothers. Great was the joy of one little lady to whom I gave an empty soup tin for the purpose. Both boys and girls like to catch small crabs and roast them over a fire, or hold
[262] them in the flame of coco-nut palm leaf torches. Grasshoppers are also caught and roasted in the same manner.

Acting.

Many children are excellent mimics, an accomplishment which is much appreciated by their audience, both children and adults. After the annual visit of inspection of the Governor, the Petats children enacted the whole occasion in most amusing fashion. A row of small ones was drawn up, to represent the parade of villagers which is always a feature of the day. One carried a bit of rag on a pole for a flag. The older child impersonating the Governor had a large umbrella very cleverly made out of leaves spiked through

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

a cane. He and two others came to the end of the landing-stage with slow formal steps, then stopped to take the salute, then he went round saying a few words to one or other of the children in the line, and finally threw among them bits of stick and pigs' teeth for which they scrambled, it being the custom of the Governor to provide tobacco and sweets to be scrambled for at the conclusion of his visit. It was all done very solemnly, till the final scramble, which ended in shrieks of laughter. After that there were races, in the fashion taught them by the Mission.

At Kurtatchi the children used to play a game in which one of their number imitated the actions of a person who is *iburar* (made mad by the spirits, as described on pp. 516–21) and the others pretended to be frightened and ran away from him, till some of them seized him and held him down.

One night two Petats children gave a dancing display, with a circle of admiring adults round them. They did a number of steps which do not occur in the very stereotyped ceremonial dances which are the only ones practised in this area, and seemed to be inventing their movements, which caused much amusement and approbation. But I think this was exceptional, and as a rule, the children were content to show off to one another, or to me. One little girl would go through a series of acrobatic feats, twisting herself about, or lifting another child and holding her horizontally, looking all the while to see whether I was watching. Other children will act for their own amusement, when alone. A little boy who lived near me at Petats used to carry on conversations with himself, in two voices, so different that I frequently looked over to see whether another child had come up. He did not know that I was observing him.

Toys.

Such toys as these children have are made, usually at the time when they are wanted, of the products of the bush. They are few in number, and very crude in construction, but they serve their turn.

Babies have rattles made of shells, with the tongue either of a smaller shell or of a dog's tooth. They may consist of a single shell on the end of a short string of shell-disks, or of several such strings tied together (Pl. 16). They are used also by adults at dances and other ceremonial occasions. I have sometimes seen women string

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

and girls, like to tie live butterflies to their fuzzy mops with a long string, and watch them flutter round their heads. Instances could be multiplied indefinitely. But they rarely tease or bully their companions, as our own children so frequently do.

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GROUP GAMES

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There is a kind of game, played generally by the little girls, the general plan of which is that the children sit down in a line or a ring and make certain movements accompanied by a chant or a conversation, or both. A typical one is as follows: The children sit in two rows, facing one another, with their legs stretched out so that the toes of the children in one row are touching the toes of those in the other. They rub their hands along their thighs, singing: '*Ko ro soa, ro ro soa, wabiu wakoko-koko kurē, wakurē, wakurē, wakurē.*' *Soa* means to paddle a canoe, the two rows of children are intended to represent the sides of a *mon* (plank canoe, used for long journeys). Presently one child asks her opposite neighbour: '*En no nom ini?*' ('Where are you going?') The other child replies: '*Io to no no i Timputs*' ('I am going to Timputs'), mentioning the name of some village known to the children. As she says it she tucks up one leg under her body. Then the next child asks the question of her opposite number, and is similarly answered, with the name of another village, and so on, till all the players have one leg tucked up under them. Then the whole performance is repeated, tucking up the other leg. When all have both legs tucked up under them, they say, all together: '*Nog ma tsura, a kūrū awara*' ('Make a fire, here is a snake'). Then they all get up and run away.

Another game, also based on a journey in a canoe, is called *gigiri mo mon*—'to paddle a canoe very hard'. The girls—whenever I saw this played it was always girls only who took part in it—sit on the ground close together, one behind the other, each with her legs stretched out one on either side of the girl in front of her, holding her thus round the hips. Then they wriggle along the ground swaying from side to side as if paddling first on one side of a canoe and then on the other, going through the motions of paddling with their hands, singing all together: '*O ro ro soa, wa bi'awa ko ko kwe.*'

Pelag bot I have seen played by little boys. One child sits on the ground with his feet outstretched. Another sits on his feet, which are kept close together. The first child puts his arms one on either side of the second and they clasp hands, then they jerk themselves

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

524 along the ground. More children then join in, each sitting on the
●857 feet of the one behind. There seem to be no words to this game, and the name of it has no meaning.

The native version of 'Ring-a-ring o' roses' is played to the formula '*a goro pio ma ētʃē ia si gin, ia si gin*', which is also meaningless.

524 Another game is said to belong properly to the island of Nissan.
857 When I saw it, on the beach at Tabut, the children made a little
177 mound of sand and sat round it in a circle, holding in their hands bits of stick ornamented with flowers and leaves tied on to them. Chanting, slowly and somewhat mournfully, the syllables '*Sororōwi, sororōwi, rōwi, rōwi*'—which they could not explain—they passed the sticks from hand to hand. A man standing by told me that at Nissan it is played by older people, and that the man 'makes magic' over the stick before handing it to the girl of his choice; this makes her desire him and afterwards they go off and have sexual connexion together. As I saw it, it appeared to be merely a game, and the children were quite little.

SEXUAL PLAY AND SEX KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN

864 On the whole, it seemed to me that there was comparatively little sexual interest in their games and behaviour to each other. The segregation of the boys wearing the upi may perhaps have some bearing on this. I have seen imitations of the act of coitus performed by children; they were done quite openly, but amounted to no more than taking up the appropriate position. On one occasion this was done by two boys, aged perhaps about ten, both wearing the *upi*. They laughed heartily all the while, and volunteered to me the explanation of what they were doing. The point of it, to them, seemed to lie in mimicking their elders. Some younger children once told me, in the course of general chatter, that they had been copulating in the bush; these included both boys and girls, but as all were obviously much below the age of puberty such sexual play as may have taken place between them must have been purely imitative, and possibly they were only romancing.

Small children who finger their own genitals or those of their companions are always promptly reproved by an older child or an adult. Sometimes a boy will pretend to cut off a smaller boy's penis with a knife or a sharp shell.

Children, as often as adults, of both sexes, told myths and stories

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

226 secretly into a calophyllum tree close at hand on the beach, breaks a limb of the tree, and calls out: '*I niga no ta ien naut mahū.*' ('It is well. The fish come to-morrow.') This is supposed to be a sign from the spirits to the men gathered there on the beach.

The men seat themselves again and chew betel-nut. While they are thus chewing, the assistant, or some other man specially appointed, comes up behind several of the seated men and steals their pepper-sticks. This is in imitation of the *atūn* stealing the fish-hooks of the fishermen.

The betel-nut chewing continues until late at night. Then about ten o'clock the medicine man tells the men that it is time for them to go. He tells them, also, to let every one know that it is taboo for any one to walk along the beach with lighted flares, and small boys [857] may not play on the beach spearing fish along the water's edge.

When the men have departed, the medicine man takes the *tokamu* (carved fish) and places it on his head. The fish's head must point to the bush. He holds it with both hands, and calls out to all the spirits to help him bring the *atūn* to the fishing-ground. He then buries the stone in the sand above high-water mark, allowing the head of the fish to protrude, pointing towards the bush. This is in order that the *atūn* may see the head of the fish and may copy its position by having their heads on top so that the fish-hooks may be seen and their mouths hooked. The medicine man then calls out the day when the *atūn* shall come. Sometimes it is five days from the time when the charm is buried in the sand; sometimes it is ten days, according to his intuition.

The place on the beach where the charm is buried is taboo, no one is allowed to approach.

On the day when the *atūn* is expected all the *mon* from the island are manned and are launched into the deep water. Here they form a line and await the advent of the fish. In each *mon* there are two fish-lines attached to bamboo poles. In smaller *mon*, where there are only two rowers, the bamboo pole and the fish-line is held by the steersman usually between his legs, to leave his hands free [227] for steering. The bamboo pole is about twelve feet long. The fish-hooks are made from clam-shell with a tortoise-shell barb. (Clam-[834] shell, *ayats*; tortoise-shell barb, *nahits*.) Neither the steersman nor the men holding the bamboo are allowed to have sexual connexion with their wives during the night previous to the expedition.

The first *atūn* to be caught is held securely by one of the steersmen

1; Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

Fire-making by this method is practised by men and boys only. 372
It is resorted to if easier means of obtaining fire are not available. I have seen it done in the bush, but only when we were some distance from a friendly village. The usual plan is to borrow a glowing stick from some one else's fire. One of the first and most frequent commands a child hears from its elders is '*Di ma ta tsura!*' 'Fetch fire.' The youngster, possibly an infant hardly able [857] to walk, toddles off to the nearest hut and returns with a burning stick or a small portion of a smouldering log, with which a new fire is started. When on a journey, either walking or by canoe, [484] lengths of smouldering log are carried, with which to rekindle the inevitable pipe. In an outrigger canoe the log is usually laid across the platform, and many canoes bear blackened marks where it has been allowed to burn down unnoticed. Serious accidents caused by this seem, however, to be rare.

A fire is kept smouldering in the huts all through the night. Any one who happens to wake up when it is low will stir up the embers or throw on another piece of wood. If it chances to go out, the woman to whom the house belongs will rekindle it as soon as she wakes, getting a smouldering ember from a neighbouring hut. The fire serves several purposes. It keeps the place warm—for nights even on the Equator can be distinctly cold, relatively speaking. The smoke serves as some protection against the mosquitoes. It is very likely that any one waking in the night will want to rekindle a pipe. The presence of a fire, however small, is also held [775] to be a safeguard against a visit from one of the *urar*, the spirits of the dead, who are never very far away.

Torches are made by bending the fronds of a dry coco-nut 373
palm leaf towards the distal end, where they are tied in a bundle. They burn for a long time. I am not sure whether any resinous substance is ever put into the bundle, but if so, it is not invariably the case, as I have seen many torches made and burned which had none. Even quite small children make these.

In their handling of fire these people exhibit a degree of casual- 372
ness which frequently caused me, accustomed to the meticulous care exercised by American Indians, no little anxiety. Yet it is remarkable how little damage to person or property occurs through fires. Probably the extreme humidity of the climate is their salvation, but their escape seems to be rather the result of good luck than good judgement.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

ences. Since there seem to be certain local differences, apart from the modifications introduced as a result of white contact, the information collected from Petats and villages on the island of Buka will be presented separately from that obtained from Bougainville.

INFORMATION CONCERNING DEATH OBTAINED AT PETATS, W. BUKA

Funerary Rites

Before the coming of the white man, the dead were thrown into the sea. Stones were fixed on to the body to make it sink; it was then taken a long way out to sea in a canoe and thrown in. This practice ceased before the coming of the mission; it was said to have been given up because the planters objected to it on the ground that the bodies floated ashore. Bodies were then buried. Before burial they were kept in the house for two nights during which ritual wailing (*tĕp*) went on. The missionaries have taught them to bury as soon as possible for sanitary reasons. Mr. Cropp, of the Methodist Mission, told me that they will, if left to themselves, bury much closer to their habitations than is at all desirable. A boy once died at the Mission during his absence, and he found that they had buried the body within 50 yards of the cookhouse. It is possible that this practice originated in a desire to protect the grave from those who might attempt to carry out the custom called *babanam*, to insult a corpse by trying to dig it up. This must be done within a week of burial. Mr. Cropp told me that about two years earlier (i.e. about 1927) a man of importance had died at Novar, a village on the southern end of the island of Buka. A watch was set over his grave, and after two or three days a man, dressed in leaves, came from the bush uttering weird cries, and began scratching at the grave. The watchers tried to catch him, but his body was greased all over with pigs' fat, and he got away. The children play at *babanam*; they cover one of their number with grass and leaves and two watch hidden somewhere near by, while another comes stealthily up and uncovers the body.

During my three months' residence at Petats only one death occurred, that of a middle-aged man who had been ill for some time. He had not been an adherent of the Mission, so Mr. Cropp, whose policy it is not to introduce changes till the natives themselves desire them, remained away from the island while the funeral was